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SUBJECT: ZIMBABWE AT THE UN: POWER SHARING STALLED, COUNTRY
A "BASKET CASE"

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: UN A/SYG Menkerios told the Security Council on November 20 Zimbabwe's power sharing negotiations were stalled. He warned of dire humanitarian and economic crises, and said the control of the police was the most pressing issue. South Africa, Russia, China, and Viet Nam supported SADC's suggestion to spilt the police ministry between the two parties. The UK, Croatia, Italy, Belgium, and the U.S. said the refusal of President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF to honor the deal giving police to MDC had stalled negotiations. UKUN tells USUN that London expects to push on Zimbabwe as soon as South Africa leaves the Council. END SUMMARY.

POLITICAL STALEMATE

12. (SBU) UN Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs Haile Menkerios on November 20 briefed the Security Council on the political stalemate and growing humanitarian crisis in Zimbabwe. Menkerios said division of the security forces remained the most contentious issue, following opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC party's refusal to go along with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) November 9 summit proposal to share the Home Affairs ministry with the President Mugabe's ZANU-PF party. Menkerios said the MDC does not believe President Mugabe and the ZANU-PF negotiate with goodwill, and quoted Tsvangirai saying "no deal is better than a bad deal." Now, Menkerios said, MDC took issue with other areas of power-sharing previously not believed to be contentious, following ZANU-PF's desire to control of at least half of the Home Affairs ministry. MDC's new concerns include the role of the National Security Council, the appointment of ambassadors and permanent secretaries, and the appointments of 10 provisional governors, according to Menkerios.

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS DIRE; ECONOMIC COLLAPSE PREDICTED

13. (SBU) Menkerios said the Zimbabwe economy was likely to collapse, which would provoke probable mass violence and an even greater humanitarian crisis. He said the people of Zimbabwe "are being held hostage" by this political stalemate, and commented water and health issues are now chronic. Most Council members' remarks reiterated the dire humanitarian situation, with many speakers noting five million people are expected to become food insecure by early 2009 and that cholera, a "disease of poverty," as South African PermRep Kumalo called it, has returned to Zimbabwe.

UK, CROATIA, ITALY, BELGIUM AND THE U.S. BLAME ZANU-PF

14. (SBU) UK PermRep Sawers said the ZANU-PF should "shoulder the responsibility" for this crisis, as ZANU-PF went back on the September 15 power-sharing deal brokered with the MDC. Sawers said violence was increasing and needed to be addressed immediately, before it spilled over Zimbabwe's borders. He recalled the Kofi Annan comment that Zimbabwe, once the breadbasket for the region, has become "a basket

case." Italy and Croatia also joined the UK in saying Mugabe was responsible for the crisis. Belgium PermRep Grauls said Mugabe's unilateral appointments were hurting the chances for reconciliation. DepPolCouns said the SADC proposal for sharing the police ministry contravened the letter and spirit of the September 15 agreement and Mugabe needed to accede to an equitable power-sharing deal.

RUSSIA, CHINA, VIET NAM, AND SOUTH AFRICA SUPPORT POLICE SPLIT

¶5. (SBU) Russian Minister Dolgov said the delays in negotiations were because the MDC was not flexible. He said Russia supported South African envoy Mbeki and SADC's efforts to resolve this impasse. China said AU and SADC mediation should be supported and Viet Nam believed the government should be established from the SADC recommendations.

¶6. (SBU) Kumalo said "99.9" of the separation of ministries were agreed on, and the fight is now over the one seat that controls the police. He said the army ministry "was never in dispute," and the MDC requested, and received, the ministries important to them: constitutional affairs; economic planning; economic finance; five of the six social portfolios; and others. Kumalo said the MDC appeared to want the European Union to "impose them into power." He said the MDC "never won an election."

UK STAKING GROUND FOR POSSIBLE 2009 RESOLUTION

¶7. (SBU) Sawers rebutted Kumalo's election comment by saying MDC won the parliamentary election. UK Counselor David Quarrey later stressed MDC was prevented from competing in the presidential runoff due to the brutality of the police

and the army. Quarrey said if the parties shared the police ministry, ZANU-PF would in essence control it, as exhibited by the police's violence and brutality during the election and runoff period.

¶8. (SBU) The UK experts told the P3 before this session UK's intention was to "put down a marker" this year for potential Council action in 2009. UK Zimbabwe affairs director Alistair Harrison, while in New York on October 31, told P3 representatives Russia would have greater difficulty blocking a resolution on Zimbabwe without South Africa's regional support for a veto (NOTE: Russia and China vetoed the June 2008 Council resolution calling for sanctions against Mugabe and 13 other regime leaders. South Africa, Viet Nam, and Libya also voted no. END NOTE). South Africa leaves the Council in December 2008. Harrison said the UK was sending a group to Uganda to both prep Uganda for its role on the Council and to encourage Uganda's assistance in returning Zimbabwe to the Council for action. Uganda takes South Africa's seat on the Council in January, 2009.
Wolff